

MA THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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PRESS RELEASE

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VENICE: SILK AND LACE
February 27 - August, 1985

Any celebration of the arts of Venice must include an homage to the magnificent textiles produced there. From their heyday in the 14th and 15th centuries through their decline in the 18th century, the Venetian textile arts had a tradition of richness and variety, with tremendous popular appeal. In this exhibition drawn from the Museum's holdings of northern Italian fabrics are examples of patterned velvets, gold brocades, and silk damasks that covered furniture and walls, hung in great swags over windows, and clothed wealthy Venetians. Also exhibited are the Venetian laces for which the city is so famous--elegant borders and inserts which ornamented clothing, church vestments, and altar cloths and hangings.

The earliest pieces in the exhibition, dating from the late 14th and early 15th centuries, are silks and velvets with lively animal and floral patterns. A cloth of cutwork lace and another with edgings and insertions of bobbin lace date from the 16th century. Among the magnificent 17th- and 18th-century laces are examples of Venetian gros point, flat point, and corraline point. Eighteenth-century brocades demonstrate the influence of French design in Venice at this time, when the glory of Venetian silk production was sadly faded. The latest piece in the exhibition is a painted velvet designed by Mariano Fortuny, a dominant presence in modern Italian fashion design until his death in 1949.

Anne Wardwell, curator of textiles at The Cleveland Museum of Art, organized the exhibition, which will be on view from February 27 through August, 1985.

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